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METTA VICTORIA FULLER, (MRS. VICTOR,) THE AUTHORESS.

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It is both pleasurable and painful to witness the struggles of unfolding genius—pleasurable, as all beauty is; painful, that it should receive so many wounds by way of mortifications and discouragements. It may be a necessity of nature that every true soul must be tried to test its temper, and that each obstacle is a lesson to be overcome—that, through many painful processes only is the triumph to be had. Were it otherwise, we should have few well-schooled minds, fewer well-tuned heart-strings:—all would be vague in purpose, unphilosophical in judgment, and profitless in fruits. No "great soul" ever rose to eminence except through struggles which would have intimidated lesser and more pliant natures. It is this which reconciles us to the adverses which beset almost every advanced step Genius dares to take; and while we look on, and feel pity for the toiler, we are filled with pleasure at the consciousness that such trial will bring forth its rich rewards of experiences,—the best treasury of wealth to the well-balanced mind.

The subject of this sketch is no exception to the almost universal experience of persons "not born to wealth, nor to power thrust." Her life has been one of hardships and mishaps—of fortune various; and, it is agreeable to write, has brought the re-

ward which merit is sure, sooner or later, to win, viz. : a loving consideration by the public and a *paying* consideration by publishers.

METTA VICTORIA FULLER was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, in the year 1831, and resided in that vicinity until 1839, when her parents removed to Ohio, with their family of five children of which she was the third. It was at the early age of nine years that her taste for poetry began to betray the genius within. Moore, Scott, Byron, and Wordsworth then became her best, familiar friends. With a singularly tenacious memory, she acquired a mastery of quotations which rendered her a prodigy to teachers and schoolmates.

At thirteen she commenced the career of authorship, which she has followed up to the present time. It is said of Bryant that, at fourteen, he made his mark in literature, and Dr. Griswold is fain to regard it as something remarkably precocious. At thirteen our subject wrote a story which yet occasionally "goes the round," from its beauty and rich glow of fancy. From that time to the present her labors for the press have been more or less constant. Sharing with a very superior mother, and her gifted sister, Frances A., the duties of an humble home, she gave herself up to study and composition so far as time would allow.

At fifteen, she wrote her first lengthy work, and produced a romance marked

by great originality and beauty. It resurrected the Past, and, under guise of fiction, gave life and power to the dead cities of Yucatan. It may be mentioned, as showing the sympathy existing between the sisters, that the same winter found Frances A. at work upon her romance of Cuban life. In their daily tasks, in their studies, in their tutorial labors, the sisters were inseparable, and, almost hand in hand, passed to the places accorded them by an admiring public.

At seventeen Metta V. became a favorite of the *Home Journal*, and wrote much for its pages. Mr. Willis took great pride in his contributor, and thus wrote of her:

"We suppose ourselves to be throwing no shade of disparagement upon any one in declaring that, in "Singing Sybil," (Miss Fuller's *nom de plume*), and her not less gifted sister, we discern more unquestionable marks of true genius, and a greater portion of the unmistakable inspiration of true poetic art, than in any of the lady minstrels—delightful and splendid as some of them have been—that we have heretofore ushered to the applause of the public. One in spirit, and equal in genius, these most interesting and brilliant ladies—both still in the earliest youth—are undoubtedly destined to occupy a very distinguished and permanent place among the native authors of this land."

This must be confessed high praise, where the brilliant Edith May, Grace Greenwood, Alice Carey, &c., were constant contributors. But similar notices were made in various "by authority" quarters, and served to give our subject and her sister the permanent place in our literature which they are both destined to adorn in the future, in a more admirable manner, even, than the past.

In 1850, the sisters published their first volume—"Poems of Sentiment and Imagination, with Dramatic and Descriptive Pieces." It was composed chiefly of contributions to the press, though "Aztec, a Tragedy," by Frances, and the "Poet Lovers," by Metta, had never before been given to the public. The volume had the effect to excite public expectancy, still more, of the power and strength of the genius of the authors. Their faults, which were many, were those of youth and inexperience, while their beauties were those belonging to true genius.

In 1850-51, George H. Derby & Co., of Buffalo, gathered together the prose of

Metta V., under the title of "Fresh Leaves from Western Woods." The volume included "The Tempter, a sequel to the Wandering Jew;" "Mother and Daughter," &c. It had a good sale.

In the fall of 1851, our subject's "Senator's Son" was published. The work was written to order, and proved a great success. It was republished in England, and thirty thousand copies sold; though, like a great many other authors whose works the English press appropriates, Miss Fuller received no material benefit from the large sale.

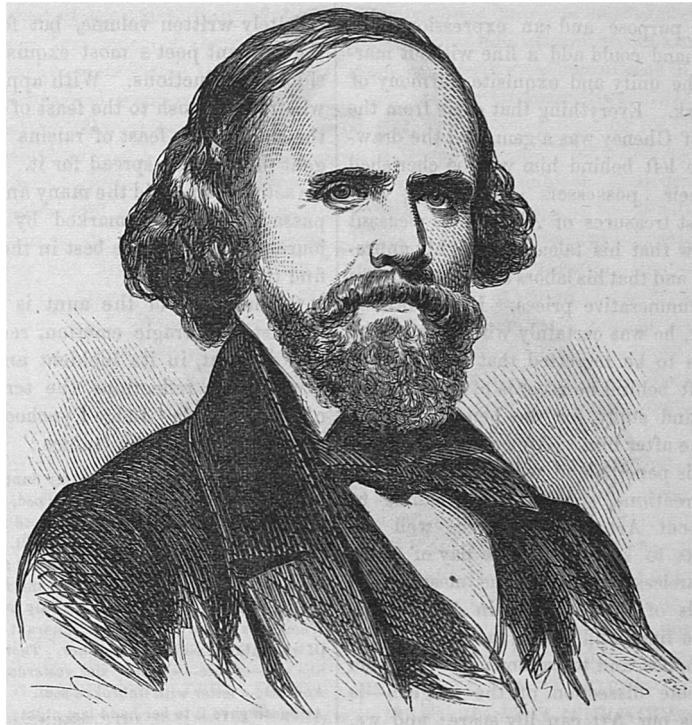
The succeeding years were devoted to very numerous magazine and newspaper engagements. A great deal of labor was expended on Prize Tales, and popular nouvelles. That branch of literature *paying* best, compelled labor which would gladly have been devoted to more noble themes and endeavors.

During the past Fall was published "Mormon Wives, a Narrative of Facts stranger than Fiction," by our subject. It is a plain unvarnished tale of Utah experiences, and by its sad narrative tells the moral of the awful polygamic institution existing in the Salt Lake Valley. The success of the volume was assured from the first, and at this moment is attracting the notice of a large circle of readers.

In poetry, Miss Fuller's contributions to the press, of late, have been, chiefly, without her signature. They are pervaded by more of earnestness and subdued passion than her earlier achievements, and we hazard nothing in the prediction that she will, ere long, be recognized as a leader in the starry throng of American Female Poets.

It may be mentioned, as showing the estimation in which our subject is held in Ohio, that she was chosen by the Ohio Editorial Association, composed of the leading journalists of the State, to prepare the poem which was read at their Annual Session, January 10th. She was the first woman chosen for that honor. Her election was unanimous.

In July, of last year, Miss Fuller was married to O. J. Victor, Esq., of Ohio, a gentleman of well-known literary taste and ability. The union was a most fitting one, and from their now united labors the world of American literature has good reason to expect much.



SETH CHENEY, THE ARTIST

#### SETH CHENEY.

We cannot occupy this page with a subject more truly worthy of notice, than by recalling to the readers of this Journal the memory of SETH CHENEY, the crayon-artist, whose recent decease has left quite a void in the world of American Art. He died at Manchester, Mass., last fall, aged fifty years, his light going out just as the fullness of his fame became his inspiration and reward. The decease of such men it is a melancholy duty to record; but Nature knoweth best her own laws: she maketh the grass to be green and the water to be pure, and she causeth both to perish in their time. So with her nobler, because more immortal, creations—man: she calleth him into being; he acts well or ill his part, and then goeth away where it is ever day. Blessed be the Great Mother of Life unto Life!

Of the life and experiences of our subject, we have little material for biography. From a just, though brief notice, by a cotemporary, we may quote:

"As a man, Cheney was known and respected for his moral purity and worth; and we have heard that he declined employing his talents in perpetuating the features of any person, however high in station, whose character did not command

his respect. He was a careful and constant student of nature; but he was also familiar with all that Art had accomplished in the course of time. A residence abroad gave him an opportunity of studying the master-pieces of Art contained in the great European galleries, and also of examining the processes adopted by the best living artists. No man was better acquainted with the literature and theory of Art. He did not fall into the common error that patient labor is unnecessary to the development of genius. On the other hand, he believed that genius imposed the necessity of labor. The effects he produced by light and shade alone, without the aid of color, appeared marvellous to those who are not aware that the simplest materials are most effective in the creative hand of genius. Though Mr. Cheney's efforts were confined to portraiture in crayon alone, yet his portraits deserved to rank with those of Stuart, and Copley, and Vandyke. His heads have their characteristics: they are not simply delineations of external form, but of character. He was equally successful with male, with female, and with children's heads. His crayon portraits do not challenge attention by elaborate detail in the finishing—they are lightly shaded, and very delicately and openly lined, but every touch